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RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 1028
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA
BAGHDAD FOR DMCCULLOUGH

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: MADAGASCAR GOVT UNCONSTITUTIONAL

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¶1. (SBU) The Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Public Communications Department released a press statement on March 20 concerning the unconstitutional transfer of power in Madagascar from President Marc Ravalomanana to Andry Rajoelina, noting that the GON does not recognize the change in government. The statement also affirmed Nigeria's support of the African Union's suspension of the new regime in Antananarivo. Full text of the Press Statement follows in para 3.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: The GON continues to be an outspoken critic of unconstitutional changes in government on the African continent and a leader within the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in promoting the principals of free elections and democracy. While many within Nigeria would question the GON's own democratic credentials, with the 2007 elections widely held as the worst in Nigeria's history, it is at least a step in the right direction that the GON is able to recognize the importance of democracy and elections in other countries. End comment.

¶3. Begin Text of Press Statement.

Federal Government Condemns Military Intervention in
Madagascar
Press Statement

The Federal Government has followed with concern the events in Madagascar in the past few days including the intervention of the Military culminating in an unconstitutional transfer of power from an elected government to the opposition.

Nigeria does not recognize unconstitutional changes of government and will not accord recognition to that which has occurred in Madagascar. In line with its constitutive act, and the Lome declaration, the African Union has suspended the new regime in Madagascar; Nigeria fully supports this position.

The Federal Government calls for a return to constitutional order, and appeals to all parties involved in the present conflict to work toward that goal in Madagascar. Government

also calls on the international community to support the people of Madagascar in this difficult period to ensure return to constitutional democracy promptly.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Abuja
20th March 2009

End text.

¶4. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
SANDERS